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PHONOGRAPH

MONTHLY REVIEW

FEBRUARY 1932

ARTICLES and FEATURES

Holst in America

By R. D. Darrell

**Some Reflections and a
Monograph on a Discovery -**

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By Ulysses J. Walsh

Record Reviews

OUR STAFF CRITICS

Edited by

Agel B. Johnson

"PHONO-ARTE"

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Editorial



WHAT has become of the Phonograph Societies and the old time phonograph enthusiast I have been asked.

My reply is: The Phonograph Societies are temporarily out of the running as far as America is concerned. The main trouble was too much commercial interference. However, I am confident that the day is not far away when every community in our land will be able to boast of a well-conducted Phonograph Society. Today they flourish in England, France, Germany, Japan and almost every other country on earth. It stands to reason, the purpose and object are too cultivating to be long neglected in this country.

Purpose: To bring together persons interested in the better grade of music as represented by phonographic recordings.

Object: To provide opportunities for hearing and comparing new and unusual records of American and Foreign origin, and to study the best recordings of standard musical compositions. Also to provide for discussions and occasional talks on matters of interest to the members.

The old time enthusiast is fast returning to his old hobby the PHONOGRAPH, the medium by which he was converted to enjoy and appreciate the noblest creations in music. After several years of Radio broadcasting it is beginning to be realized by all of us that broadcast cannot fill our needs as completely as does the gramophone record. The vast majority today are variable in their tastes, not following slavishly any particular type of music, but rather seeking variety, and so long as the average person, wants the music suited to his own particular mood at any particular moment, so long will he not be satisfied with the cut and dried Radio programme of any description, and so long will he depend on his gramophone records to fill his requirements. Hence the old timer is fast returning to his old hobby the PHONOGRAPH.

Axel B. Johnson

Holst in America

An interview with one of the first contemporary composers
to conduct his own works for recording

by R. D. DARRELL

AN AMERICAN visit by Gustav Holst to conduct three concerts of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and to give a half-year course in composition at Harvard University gave a welcome opportunity to interview one of the most vital contemporary composers and one of the first to make phonographic versions of his own works. Mr. Holst, holding admirably old-fashioned and uncommon notions on self-publicity, frankly warned me in advance that I should expect very little in the way of publishable information from him.

"I don't go in for this sort of thing at all at home, but I have been received so kindly in America that I feel I must make an exception to my rule of not giving interviews. But please don't ask me the conventional reporters' questions. I've been here only twice before and for a very short time. All I know about America, all most people in England can know, is that it is very big, bigger and richer in variety than we can really conceive. And I'm heartily sick and tired of visiting Europeans who rush into print with their personal opinions and prejudices on anything and everything American!"

In the face of such refreshing candor I looked forward, not as I had expected to a wealth of material on the phonograph and nationalism in music, but to a better notion of the reserved yet tremendously vital personality behind the powerful music of the *Planets* and the *Dance of the Spirits of Earth*.

With this in mind I arrived early for my appointment at Symphony Hall and slipped in on one of the rehearsals for Mr. Holst's concerts in Providence and Boston. For it is in rehearsal that a conductor's powers are best displayed. There one glimpses in embryo and growth musical effects that come off with such seeming naturalness and ease in concert and on records. Even among the most assiduous collectors and students of recorded orchestral works there is little genuine understanding and appreciation of the weary hours and herculean efforts that are required for an adequate public exposition of the music at hand. Remembering Mr. Holst's recorded performances and then

hearing him carefully evolve his concert performances of several of the same works was a remarkable, a revelatory musical experience, giving new significance to a thousand little details accepted almost without analysis when they are heard in their finished state.

One had to watch Mr. Holst on the conductor's stand no more than a few minutes to get a vivid impression of the man and musician. He is no sensationalist, no showman. To him the orchestral men are flesh and blood, not merely mechanical instruments. Informally, good-humoredly, without condescension or affectation, he painstakingly goes over the ground to be covered, much as an alert and sensitive tutor would go over a difficult but engrossing problem with a group of talented students.

Never a subscriber to the currently popular faith in machine-like precision as an end in itself, I was delighted with the way Mr. Holst strove for exactness only where exactness was demanded, letting the orchestra have its head in the more exuberant passages. Without sacrificing anything to correctness, he refused to be enslaved by it, getting a natural fire and spontaneity to his performances that are all too often missing from the overly studied "interpretations" of many virtuoso conductors.

One of the works in rehearsal for the Providence concert was his own orchestration of Bach's organ *Fugue à la Gigue*, and Mr. Holst spent most of his available time in obtaining clarity, gusto, and dynamic restraint in the first half or so of the piece. Then in the gloriously joyous close he leaned over and told the players just to "settle down and enjoy yourselves!" They did indeed, and the listener could not fail to be carried along with their evident enjoyment in the music.

Later, when I talked with Mr. Holst, I got an interesting sidelight on this work. "When I was studying the organ some forty years or more ago it struck me that of all Bach's organ works, just one, this fugue, seemed ineffective on the instrument for which it was composed." (The phonophile who checks up on the organ version—recorded by Goss-Custard for Victor—is certain to come to the

same conclusion.) "I made no attempt to orchestrate it at the time, but last year when the British Broadcasting Corporation requested me to write a large work for their military band, I decided to get my hand in—not having written for band for several years—by scoring the *Fugue à la Gigue* before attacking my own work, which was to be the Prelude and Scherzo, *Hammersmith*, I am playing here in an orchestral version. My publisher, rightly fearing that opportunities for military band performances of the fugue would be small, insisted on issuing it in an orchestral arrangement, where of course it is likely to have many more performances. I still feel, however, that the band version is far richer and more effective."

(There is such a scarcity of really fine material for military band that we would be lucky indeed to have the original band scoring of the fugue added to the brilliant recorded repertoires of such first-rate bands as that of the B. B. C. or the French Garde Républicaine. The *Fugue à la Gigue* would occupy only one side of a ten-inch disc and is such invigorating music that it would be quite likely to emulate the great popularity of some recent Bach arrangement "best sellers", often works far less well adapted to transcription than this fugue.)

Record collectors familiar with Mr. Holst's recording of his *Planets* (Columbia Masterworks Set 83) may well envy me the opportunity of hearing him rehearse this gargantuan work, as well as Haydn's Symphony No. 3, and his own ballet music from the opera *The Perfect Fool* (from which Albert Coates recorded the *Dance of the Spirits of Earth* on the odd side of his Victor set of *La Valse*).

Mr. Holst was obviously delighted with the skill of the Boston orchestra and stopped to praise nearly as often to correct. On striking a snag in the symphony, he chided gently, "You've given me every detail so far that I've longed to get out of other orchestras... now let's get this right too." Again, after a long tutti, he remarked that he had heard several wrong notes but would not go back to correct them. "I'm leaving that entirely to you. I've learned this week how capable and dependable you are, and the only problems I feel I need to work out with you are those of ensemble, not those of slight individual errors which I know you'll have corrected by tomorrow."

The brilliant playing of M. Mager in an exacting trumpet passage in the *Planets* brought forth impulsive, warming praise: "Thank you, first trumpet, thank you very,

very much!" His rebukes held no sting: "I'm afraid there was something wrong there. That passage is very important, and the rest of the orchestra is playing so beautifully..." Again, he stressed a detail in the violas in the Haydn symphony: "I know that this is almost never heard, but do try to bring it out... it is so characteristic!" Papa Haydn himself would have warmed to the heartfelt way in which that was said.

Manners reveal the man. The talk I had later with Mr. Holst strengthened and confirmed the impression I had already obtained. Vehement, mercurially alive, he has no patience with generalities and platitudes. Once he wagged an accusing finger at me. "Now you're asking the usual reporter's questions. I'm not going to give personal views on controversial topics. Who am I to lay down the law? There are too many opinions, too many tastes. The only place I state my mind, and don't stand for any nonsense either, is in teaching. And that's my business!"

He was reluctant to speak about the phonograph and recorded music. "You should tell me about it, not I you. I really know very little about it, although of course I have always been interested in conducting for recording, especially since the new processes were invented, making it much less trying work than when I first recorded my *Planets* and *Beni Mora* suite."

I asked Mr. Holst how he had come to record these works in the early days of symphonic recording when they were revolutionary material indeed for the phonograph. He seemed surprised to learn that he was perhaps the first of the younger school of contemporary composers to conduct their own works for recording. He had no thought of path-breaking when he received and accepted an invitation to record.

(I should interrupt to note that the invitation which came as a surprise to Mr. Holst was from Mr. Louis Sterling, then Chairman of the Board of the International Columbia Companies. Mr. Sterling is a man to whom recorded music owes much, not alone for the inauguration of the Columbia Masterworks Library, but for his pioneer efforts in obtaining a fair hearing for contemporary music on the phonograph. This unsolicited invitation to a composer unknown to him personally, but whom he admired as a leading figure of the British musical renaissance, is entirely typical of Mr. Sterling, and as every phonophile knows, set the example of having composers conduct their own works for recording—a policy which has given us our present rich repertoire of composers' versions: Holst,

Vaughn-Williams, Ravel, Elgar, Strawinski, and many others.)

Mr. Holst asserts that he is too old to adjust himself with ease to the phonograph, that he is like a painter of the last century when photography first came in—he recognizes the remarkable possibilities of the new medium and watches with approval steady technical and artistic development, but he is too busy working in other media to take great active interest. Nevertheless, Mr. Holst himself has contributed a significant page to phonographic history, a significance that I am sure he vastly under-estimates. And if he is not a proponent of the phonograph his freedom from active prejudice sets

an example to many more hide-bound musicians of his era who refuse to contribute in any way to phonographic progress.

Whatever may be the last word on Gustav Holst's own music (and many of us feel that the lusty humor and abounding rhythmical life of such works as the *St. Paul's* suite, *Jupiter*, and *Hammersmith* have contributed an invigorating and healthful strain to modern music), no one coming into contact with the man can fail to note and admire his candor, open-mindedness, passionate distaste of self-exploitation and showmanship,—qualities that are as rare as they are admirable in the musical world of today.

Some Reflections – and a Monograph on a Discovery

By HARRY L. ANDERSON

THE glamor of the phonograph has lain very largely in its ability to reproduce the art of great interpreters for those who have admired them deeply in the flesh, or by repute. But no less remarkable is the part the phonograph plays in spreading the work of such artists far beyond the bounds where their visits, or their fame, have reached—a function that brings to mind the extent to which sound-recording, and sound-reproducing devices have had effect on the creating of reputations.

One is reminded, for instance, of the advance popularity built up for Galli-Curci and Tauber in this country largely by their records; of the fact that most Americans can know more of the caliber of work of the Berlin, Paris, London, Manchester, or Amsterdam orchestras, than they can know about most of their native orchestras; of the esteem enjoyed by the Cortot-Casals-Thibaud Trio in a country where they have never played as an organization; of the recognition that many individual European artists, many not widely traveled even in their own countries, have won in this country through their records.

Possibly the radio is an even more effective press-agent. During the last year or so, to cite an example close at hand, I have witnessed the widespread vogue in Southern California—among layman, flaxen-haired admirer, and professional musician alike—that a series of weekly broadcasts created for the

young Danish pianist, Gunnar Johansen.*

Both media should work a lasting effect on interpretative art which, deprived of the visual, must rely entirely on the aural to stimulate the emotions. But the more profound effect should come from the phonograph. Through it, interpretative art, given the chance of unlimited and exact repetition, can eschew the obvious, and develop more on lines of subtlety and finish. And freed from the limitation of being ephemeral, it must be stimulated by the thought that, like

*Admirers of Johansen will be pleased to know that he has recorded already for Danish Columbia, and may appear shortly in domestic releases.

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creative art, it can pit itself against the test of time.

There remains the probability that when records are the most vivid reminders left of a performer's art, posterity may think less highly of some whose fame is dependent as much on a striking presence as on ability, and more highly of some who enjoy little personal popularity during their lifetimes.

These reflections are occasioned by the gift to me, by my friend Mr. Wallace Dancy, of a set of records that emphasized the fact that, in spite of ten years of what most people would admit a very lively interest in pianists and piano playing, I might easily have passed another ten, except for the phonograph, without becoming acquainted with the career and art of at last one genuinely fine pianist. And since both his records and career are as worthy of attention as they are apparently lacking it in this continent, I offer this remedy for their neglect.

José Vianna da Motta, the distinguished Portuguese pianist, is not, as a matter of fact, entirely a stranger to this country. But his visits in 1892-93, and again in 1899, were during the initial Paderewski furore when many fine pianists, including the Pole, Slivinski, and even Busoni, were not receiving from the American public the attention they might have expected.

Da Motta was born in 1868 on the African Island of St. Thomas—proof that concert pianists can come from almost anywhere. The following year he was taken to Lisbon, where his musical training began. The influence of Sophie Menter, one of Liszt's greatest pupils, induced King Ferdinand to have him sent in 1882 to the Scharwenka brothers in Berlin. That was the beginning of the important part the Liszt tradition was to play in his life. Liszt himself in Weimar was the next step, in 1885, when da Motta became one of that still considerable band of gifted disciples who gathered around the great musician during his last years. Work with von Bülow after Liszt's death no doubt intensified the tradition; perhaps it was a final echo, in 1915, when da Motta was chosen to succeed Stavenhagen, another Liszt pupil, at the Geneva Conservatory.

In Europe, his ability won him for many years the title of court pianist in Berlin, and more recently, the directorship of the National Conservatory and Symphony Orchestra of Lisbon. South America since 1902 has also known him for a distinguished artist. In 1907, he presented ten different programs in Buenos Aires alone—no doubt more of a feat then than now, when Godowsky,

Levitzki, Moiseiwitsch, and others, have had to satiate the growing appetites of the less toured parts of the globe. His last visit to Brazil, a few seasons ago, was referred to by Novaes as one of the events of the season.

So much for the career.

The records reveal a highly sensitive, poetic musician, free from exaggeration of style, and well-equipped technically and tonally. The recording, not equal in realism and sonority to the best modern piano recording, is superior to that of other Pathé piano records I have heard. Certain tonal subtleties are notably caught—sometimes a silvery clarity that, with da Motta's other qualities, make one hope that he may record some of his admired Bach playing.

Two of the records are worthy of wide attention. On 5453, da Motta and Mme. de Castello Lopes have recorded a *Duetto Concertante* by Mozart-Busoni. I am not familiar with the original form of this piece, but here it makes a stimulating, brilliant, concert work, a notable addition to the limited list of Mozart piano recordings, played with an engaging verve and digital fleetness. Even more important is X5451 with an *Intermezzo* from Busoni's 'Gynécée du Turandot' and the *Eglogue* from Liszt's 'Années de pèlerinage suisse', played by da Motta alone. The boldness and vigor of Busoni's mind, combined with some of the sensuousness of the impressionist school, result in a rather strange emotional appeal in the former—if one doesn't confine emotionalism to romanticism—which is reflected in the playing. There is something lovely about this record that, among the rather choice additions I have made to my library during the past year, makes it stand apart from the rest. As for the *Eglogue*, many fine artists of da Motta's generation have forgotten how to play this type of music as poetically as he, and younger players, in comparison, seem to inject into it a false sentiment.

Schubert playing of a high order is found on X5454, in the *Menuet de la Fantaisie*, Op. 78, and Liszt's transcription of 'Wohin?'. Rachmaninoff has recorded his own transcription of the latter for Victor (1196—*The Brooklet*). The comparison is worthwhile—the Russian's more realistic version, Hamlet in modern dress, and the older version, to the modern ear, left Schubert much as it found him. The Chopin Polonaise in A Flat, Op. 53, on X5452, is impressively played, but I find this record less distinctive.

The other records, of da Motta's own compositions, are from a definitely dated period of salon music. Entitled Portuguese scenes,

they indicate that the Portuguese, or da Motta, reacted very much as anyone else to the romanticism of the '90's. The formula then was curves and billows; now it is straight lines and edges. Those who care for the curves will like 'Cantiga de Amor' on X5449, and 'Valsa Caprichosa' on X5450. 'Chula', coupled with the valva, is more suggestive of folk-music. Personally I value

them as typical examples of a genre, played authentically with all the charm and grace they can possess.

The labelling of the Pathé records is very complete, down to mentioning the use of a Gaveau piano. It might be added that they were among the varied and unusual importations of the International Records Agency.

Records From Czechoslovakia

By E. UGGE

It is a pity that until now one of the best of all European record lines has received scarcely a line of notice in the phonographic press outside of the boundaries of the country in which it is being produced. The reference is to the Ultraphon records now being produced in Czechoslovakia. The disintegration of the Dutch-German interests which controlled this brand until recently has left the affairs of the completely equipped plant, studios and offices in Prague in the hands of Czech interests, and the work is now going forward with Czech management, Czech money, Czech technicians, and Czech artists. It is the second venture of its kind within the country, the first being the Esta organization. The new group, however, still acts as outlet for the German Ultraphon interests in addition to conducting all the functions of an entirely independent corporate entity. Under this new arrangement the Ultraphon record has taken precedence over all other brands at present obtainable in Czechoslovakia.

Czechoslovakia is preeminently a music lovers' country. The land of Dvorak, Smetana, Weinberger, Ludikar, Emmy Destinn, Janacek, Kubelik, etc., etc., is extraordinarily responsive to artistic impulses, and it is no miracle, therefore, that its entrance into the field of musical record manufacture should be marked by a singular measure of highly gratifying success. The following records from the Czech Ultraphon repertoire, a few of which happen to be from German originals, are illustrative of what the entire repertoire affords.

Records of Professor Bakule's singers are of particular interest. This group is a chorus of Czech children, the best trained and most interesting in Europe. Their uncom-

monly sweet voices proved a surprise even to American audiences whom they complimented with the most inspired singing of patriotic and other English songs in exceedingly creditable English. The records of this group should be played only with a soft needle, and preferably in the gloom. The voices flash with the brilliance of lightning. Again they reflect that calm light that lies on deserted open roads in the calm suspense of a summer day noon. At times the chorus suggests the silvery tinkling fall of a myriad, musical, twinkling stars out of a vast, velvet sky towards an enraptured earth. The placidity of a gas lighted suburban street in the violet gloom of approaching night, when diamonds glitter in the new fallen snow, breathes from some of these records. Others are as whimsical as a grandfather's tale spun to enrapture a wide-eyed four-year-old.

These are some of the best examples of the Bakule Chorus records:—

- A12017 The Star Spangled Banner; Dixie, and My Country, 'tis of Thee; Abide with me. In English.
- A12037 Dame Get Up; Old King Cole; Sleep, Baby, Sleep. In English.
- A12038 Where Are You Going; Simple Simon; Even-tide. In English.
- A12003 Milenka—travicka (Dvorak) and Stilly Night (Zdenko Fibich). Sung in Czesky.

Two records sung in Czesky by Paul Ludikar of New York's Metropolitan Opera, are of uncommon interest and charm. His ravishing bass-baritone voice reveals his poetical soul and betrays his great understanding of the musical values of the language. The recording here is exceedingly good. Not the least interesting is a composition by Ludikar himself.

B10129 Kde domov můj (Where is my home?), the Czech national anthem, composed by Skroup and arranged by A. M. Nademlejnsky, and Dobru noc, ma mila (Good night, my beloved), Slovakian folksong, same arranger.

B10127 Píseň o bleše (Song of the Flea), by Moussorgsky and Goethe, translated into Czech by Paul Ludikar, and Medak (The Bumble Bee), words and music by Paul Ludikar.

In two parts on No. A10183, played by Prof. Fr. Wiedermann, we find the last of all Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsodies,—No. 19. Unlike the famous Second, it is comparatively unknown. However, the same light of genius is radiated from it. Around the themes of the Magyar folksongs with their enchanting verve has been woven a veritable firework of variations. Prof. Wiedermann's fine transcription, his command of organ technique, and the subtle elaboration of phrasing, that salvation of organ expressiveness where dynamics cannot be varied by mere key pressure, make this interesting record a most desirable addition to every record library.

Old dances may seem to be a little strange in these days, but many of the old tunes are on the average of greater value than the modern dance tunes turned out by a musical industry. A much greater measure of musical understanding went into the composition of the older dances, and when one was written by a composer with his heart and soul in his music, as with Hilmar, then a musical creation full of life and joy, and highly artistic, results. The unforgettable little polka by Hilmar, drawn from the deep wells of music upon which Smetana and Dvorak also drew, is "musique legere" of a most highly respectable order. The recording is excellent.

A10135 Vzdechy Srbu (Sighs of Serbes), polka from the year 1835, by Fr. Hilmar, and Vesely Valcik (Gay Waltz) by Wetzel-Mueller, played by Prague woodwind quintette.

The piece de resistance is to be found upon two twelve-inch records, E10257 and E10278, of which it occupies three faces. It is the scherzo from Bedrich Smetana's Triumphant Symphony played by the Radiojournal Symphony Orchestra, the broadcasting orchestra of Prague, under the baton of Otokar Jeremias.

Unquestionably the scherzo will be of interest to those who find in the phonograph a means of familiarizing themselves with orchestral works, especially those which are too infrequently heard in the concert hall. The scherzo presents a wonderful combination of thought and humor. It was composed in the first years of Smetana's creative life, but already presaged the genial expressiveness which came to full flower in his later works.

The recording is excellent throughout. There are some large movements in the scherzo, but at no time is the orchestra lost in its own shadows. This was recorded in Prague, of course.

The fourth face of this pair of records is occupied by "Svatební tanec" from Dvorak's "Holoubka", "The wed-

ding dance from "The Little Dove"). This is conducted by Erich Kleiber as leader of the great orchestra at Berlin. It is full of the charm which one may expect from almost every composition of the great Czech.

Those who accord their interest to this fruitful quarter will be amply repaid in pleasure and instruction gained. And the Czechs, we are certain, will add vastly to their friendships abroad.

PHONOGRAPHIC ECHOES

Special New Phonograph Records for Theatre Use

The American Record Corporation, 1776 Broadway, New York, world's largest producers of popular priced phonograph records, now offers a special record for theatre use. This new Theatre Record can be used everywhere a motion picture is exhibited. They entertain while a silent trailer is on the screen, during intermission and also serve as exit marches.

They can also be utilized in non-theatrical organizations, such as the Y. M. C. A.'s, Churches, Clubs, Schools, etc.

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Vic Irwin and many others.

The following houses are now using Theatre Records manufactured by the American Record Corp.; Warner Bros.; Paramount, Loews, R. K. O., Fox and many others, including the Astor Theatre in New York where "Hell Divers", a \$2.00 top picture, is now being featured.

RCA Photophone, Inc., Merged with RCA Victor Co., at Camden

As a further step in the unification of activities of the Radio Corp. of America in the radio and electrical entertainment fields under the RCA Victor Co., Inc., at Camden, N. J., David Sarnoff, president of the Radio Corp. of America, announced last week the consolidation of RCA Photophone, Inc., with the RCA Victor Co.

The unification, Mr. Sarnoff stated, joins two closely associated lines of radio and electrical development. It will mean a closer association of sound motion picture recording and reproducing with the radio laboratory and should give impetus to the introduction of sound reproducing equipment for use in homes, schools and industrial organizations, as well as in theatres.

Both companies involved in the unification are wholly owned subsidiaries of the Radio Corp. of America. The staff of the RCA Photophone Co. as well as the operations of that company are being transferred to the RCA Victor Co. at Camden, N. J.

manner. Two 10" recordings of Miss Farrar's voice which have never been published or offered for sale in any form have been found. Both were recorded prior to 1923 and comprise the following selections:

Der Nussbaum (Schumann), in English with piano.
Ouvre Tes Yeux Bleus (Massenet), in French with orchestra.

Miss Farrar has given our club special permission to issue these recordings in a limited edition. The edition will consist of numbered copies, the first 100 to be personally autographed on one of the labels by Miss Farrar. Although Miss Farrar is no longer interested in her phonograph records, she is doing us this great favor as a personal gesture to help make our club a success. Orders are to be filled in numerical sequence as received. Collectors should thoroughly understand that this edition, when exhausted, will not be supplemented with additional pressings.

The usual price for 10" single white label pressings is, as we all know, \$3. per single side. Yet, I am pleased to announce that this double-faced record will be \$2. postpaid and insured to any part of the United States. (Foreign orders should be placed immediately with the nearest associated branch of the Victor Company, the special edition number being IRRC No. 1. The branch company will order direct from the Victor Co. thus eliminating high duties.)

All communications, orders and money-orders should be sent to the Secretary. If successful with our first issue, announcements of further choices will be mailed monthly to those interested.

WILLIAM H. SELTSAM, Secretary,
318 Reservoir Ave.,
Bridgeport, Conn., U. S. A.

Reminiscences of Anthony and Harrison

By ULYSSES J. WALSH

PERHAPS it is one of the most ironical of life's little ironies that "Harry Anthony and James F. Harrison", the veteran tenor and baritone recording artists whose turn it is now to be "immortalized" by this historian, despite the fact that twenty-five years ago they held a virtual monopoly of the business of making records of sacred songs and gospel hymns, are always associated in my mind with two ludicrous incidents involving their names that took place during my childhood. This, as I have already indicated, in spite of their recorded work having been, probably, of the most serious nature of any that ever attained noteworthy popularity among the masses of disc and cylinder buyers.

With the chronological order of their appearance reversed, the two incidents are as follows:—

No. 2. It was the summer of 1914. The historian, then a boy of eleven, had moved the family Victrola to the front porch of his home at South Boston, Va., and had chosen to hear for his diversion, "Yaller Gal", a loud and boisterous and by no means refined "coon shout" by that grand old black-face comedian, Billy Golden.

Suddenly there hove into view the Rev. E. K. Odell, to whose Methodist church the appreciator of "Yaller Gal" then owned a nominal allegiance. Horrors! Something must be done to save the family's reputation for decorous behavior from disgrace!

Something was done. By the time the minister came into hailing distance the "coon shout" had been throttled and "Anthony and Harrison's" version of "Looking This Way" ("looking this way, looking this way, angels in glo-ree, looking this way") was revolving upon the turntable. Later I came to find out that my swift change of pace was hard on Rev. Odell, who was a thoroughly good sort, of the kind that would have enjoyed the obvi-out buffoonery of "Yaller Gal", but it seemed to your servant's juvenile mind that the family honor was at stake and he was taking no chances.

No. 1. Several years earlier, probably late in 1910, the writer, then seven years old, was standing beside a huge rack of Edison records in Patterson's drug store and wishing that Mr. Patterson, "the most obliging man in South Boston", would happen along and give a few of the wax cylinders a trial. In came a farmer, flushed with having disposed of his crop of tobacco at a better than usual price, and loudly announcing that "the old woman and the kids" had asked him to fetch home a few pieces for the graphophone.

"You'll want 'Casey Jones', won't you?" the clerk inquired. "Everybody's buying it now. We must have sold a million of it. Billy Murray sings it, you know."

"Naw, I wouldn't want 'Casey Jones', not even if Ada Jones sung it!" was the bucolic gentleman's unexpected reply. "I don't hold with all these here ragtime reels. What I

want is some good old-time pieces like the songs I learnt at my mother's knee. I want some good hymn tunes by this here Anthony an' Harrison. They sing good pious pieces, an' ef I held with gamblin'—which I don't—I'd bet they was godly men."

Here the youthful Mr. Walsh, his head already at that early date buzzing with names of records and recording artists, as well as odd items of information concerning them, disobeyed the then current dictum that children should be seen and not heard, and intruded into the conversation with a freedom for which he was usually not at all remarkable.

Hoping that he was saying something funny, he brightly advised: "I wouldn't be too sure about Anthony and Harrison being such godly men. I notice that they changed their names lately to John Young and Frederick J. Wheeler, and that sounds to me mighty like the police are after 'em!" He laughed musically, as an invitation to his hearers to do likewise.

He who obviously had been celebrating spiritedly (judging from the flavor of some pungent essence upon his breath) the better than ordinary sum his tobacco had brought, eyed the eager youngster with ineffable contempt.

"Is that so?" he snappishly returned. "Well, it don't matter to me, young feller, if they calls theirselves Adam an' Eve, I believe that Anthony an' Harrison are godly men, an' I cotton to their pieces a heap mo'n I do to these here cussed ragtime reels!" So saying, he chose "Tarry With Me", "Softly Now the Light of Day", "When the Mists Have Rolled Away" and a few other Anthony and Harrison duets, and after having insultingly spurned a proposed that he add "Uncle Josh Keeps House" to his collection, vibrated out of the store. The betting should have been five to one that he dropped and smashed all those very breakable cylinders before he reached his wagon, standing farther down the street, and I very much doubt that "the old woman and the kids" enjoyed any new "pieces" on the "graphophone" that night.

A few moments after the departure of the countryman the world's youngest phonograph fiend also left the drugstore, meditating upon the exciting discovery he had made (how I don't know, now) that Anthony and Harrison and Young and Wheeler were one and the same, and thinking them very foolish to have discarded their real names for assumed ones.

But in so thinking I had the situation reversed. The singers, having already a well-deserved reputation for excellence in church, concert and oratorio singing, had simply seen fit to use "aliases" for record making until the standard of reproduction had sufficiently improved so that they would need feel no sense of shame at anyone's knowing that the records were their work. For something like a decade they had concealed their identities from the public. Now they could come forth and be known for whom and what they were.

Neither John Young nor Frederick Wheeler seems to be certain of the date that they first began to make records. Young, in a letter to me, says that he remembers making cylinders, but that he has no idea of the year in which his career as a recording artist (kept clear and distinct from his activities as a church and concert singer under his own name) started. Wheeler is inclined to think that his phonograph experiences began just about thirty years ago, though as he delves back into the past he can hardly believe it has been that long since he was a young, aspiring church singer, eagerly grasping at any opportunity to add to his income.

Before taking up singing in earnest, Wheeler (who, like Young, was born in New York state), worked for a while as a reporter on a Utica newspaper. Then he became interested in singing and, after receiving some recognition as a church singer, managed to please the recording department of the old Universal Talking Machine Company, which made Zon-o-phone records, when he did some test recording, and—but, on second thought, it would be best to quote from his own reminiscences:

"It certainly does not seem some thirty years back, but that is correct", Mr. Wheeler says, "that I first entered the record making field, but, alas, Father Time's record of the years cannot be disputed. Looking back upon the happy days spent in the recording laboratories during many years seems indeed quite like a dream. I still have some of my old records to remind me, however.

"If my memory serves me correctly, my first recording was for the Universal Talking Machine Company. I remember that at that time I was struggling to make 'both ends meet', so to speak, and when a year's contract was offered me by this company for the grand total of \$1,400 I immediately realized what financial relief means.

"Well, the funny thing about that year's work was that shortly after signing the con-

tract something happened at the recording laboratory, and work was suspended. I made only four or five records during the whole year for Universal (which was shortly afterward absorbed by Victor), but I collected just the same.

"It was some time after that contract expired that the opportunity to join the Edison forces occurred. I remember going to the laboratory at Orange, N. J., for my first 'date' and it was an exciting day, I assure you. The first record was 'Old Jim's Christmas Hymn' (vividly remembered by the writer!) and was sung as a duet, my teammate being 'Al' Campbell,—who has been a popular recording artist through all these years. For some reason I can't recall we didn't continue our team work, and it was soon after that that the team of 'Harry Anthony and James F. Harrison' was formed for the recording of hymns."

Here for a moment I cease to quote Mr. Wheeler's own reminiscences, and enter into the field of speculation. Neither Young nor

Wheeler has mentioned how they happened to choose the recording names they did, but I hazard the supposition that Walter Miller, the Edison recording director who metamorphosed John Macdonald into Harry Macdonough, took the responsibility of making over John Young into Harry Anthony. If that be true, Miller must have disliked the name of John as much as he apparently fancied Harry.

As for Wheeler, I take it that his full given name is Frederick James and that he simply reversed this making it James F., and selecting Harrison as the last name from some source unknown to me. Whether these speculations are correct or not, it is certain that the hymns sung as tenor and baritone duets by Anthony and Harrison were for many years among the best sellers in the Edison and, a little later, the Columbia catalogs. They did not record for Victor until 1910, and shortly after that time their successful association under assumed names came to an end.

(To be continued)

Reviews of New Records

By OUR STAFF CRITICS

ORCHESTRAL

BACH: *Suite No. 2 in B minor*, played by *Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam*, conducted by *William Mengelberg*. COLUMBIA (3 D's, \$6).

Grave; Allegro (parts 1 and 2).
Rondo; Bourree No. 1; Bourree No. 2 (part 3).
Sarabande (part 4).
Polonaise (part 5).
Menuet; Badinerie (part 6).

This suite of dances can be had in several editions and it would be interesting to know which one Mengelberg used in this recording. The arrangement is different from that of the earlier four part set made for Victor by Frederick Stock, a version for which we have great admiration. Although two years have elapsed since its phonograph debut it still stands as Stock's finest recording achievement. Mengelberg utilizing six record sides gives you more of the suite. Both sets pay eloquent tribute to the jovial Bach, the happy paterfamilias.

The most striking thing about the Concertgebouw performance is not, as you would expect, the playing of the flute soloist, but rather that of the strings. These on occasion in the past had sounded strident, even coarse, but although the reverberation is still there to some extent, the tone has mellowed and for sustained sonority and flowing quality they have here much in common with the superb strings of the Philadelphia Orchestra. Evidently Mengelberg has taken considerable pains with this recording. The character of each dance

is admirably preserved. The only departure from a strictly orthodox reading is a certain exaggeration in the *rallentando*, which in the case of the *Allegro* for a moment gives you a feeling that the brakes have been applied too rapidly. It is doubtful whether this will in any way interfere with the enjoyment to be gotten out of these attractive disks. Bach did not spend all his time in prayer or in thoughts of gloomy nature. Certainly the B minor Suite is proof that he could laugh, dance and make merry. Mengelberg gives a full-blooded performance.

WAGNER: *Siegfried Idyll*, played by *Symphony Orchestra* conducted by *Bruno Walter*. COLUMBIA 68011-12D (2 D12, \$2.00 each).

With the *Siegfried Idyll* the reviewer finds himself caught on the horns of dilemma. Before Walter's second try at it (the first version being part of an early Wagner Album Set issued by Columbia) both Muck and Klemperer stole the show with performances generally conceded to be perfect. You may be justified in wondering whether, in view of the plethora of Wagnerian recordings in recent years, the saturation point has not been reached, whether new versions now merely retrace their steps. Surely in the case of *Tannhauser* and *Die Meistersinger Overtures* and the *Idyll* there is surfeit.

Between Walter's first and second recordings there is of course no comparison. The former belongs to the early electric recording period which is fast receding into the past. The present set has had the benefit of the best modern recording methods and the recording has a crystalline purity.

RCA VICTOR

ANNOUNCES

NEW RECORDINGS

BRAHMS *Sonata in G Major* Opus 78 for Violin and Piano. Played by Adolf Busch and Rudolf Serkin on three double-faced Victor Records, Nos. 7487-7489 . . . in automatic sequence Nos. 7490-7492. In album M-121 with explanatory booklet. List price, \$6.50.

BACH—Cantata No. 4, *Christ lag in Todesbanden* (Christ lay in Death's Dark Prison) and excerpts from Cantata No. 140 *Wachet auf!* (Sleepers Wake!). Performed by the Orféo Catalá of Barcelona on five double-faced Victor Records Nos. 11178-11182 . . . in automatic sequence Nos. 11183-11187. In Album M-120, with explanatory booklet. List price, \$7.50.

DE GLORY ROAD (Jacques Wolfe).

EDWARD (Loewe)

Sung by Lawrence Tibbett. 12-inch record No. 7486, \$2.00.

SINFONIA IN B FLAT MAJOR (Johann Christian Bach) Played by Willem Mengelberg and the Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of New York. Two 12-inch records Nos. 7483-7484, \$2.00 each.

NEW LONG PLAYING RECORDS

GEMS FROM THE MIKADO. Performed by the Civic Light Opera Company. Two 10-inch records L-24005 and L-24006. List price \$1.50 each.



RCA VICTOR COMPANY, INC.

Camden, New Jersey

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Walter, apparently using a smaller orchestra than Muck, gives a tender and moving performance. His dynamic range is larger than that of Klemperer and he does not have his delicate restraint, the outstanding feature of the Klemperer version. Walter strikes a golden mean and, because of the solid merit of his performance, he takes his place on the pedestal with the other two conductors without crowding either one of them off. Regarding the music and its origin, an extended review of it appeared in the April 1931 issue of the magazine. Lawrence Gilman wrote of the Idyll, "It has not its like in all music for blended loveliness, blitheness, poetic charm and enamouring tenderness."

RACHMANINOFF: *Piano Concerto No. 3, in D minor*, Op. 30, played by Vladimir Horowitz and the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates; on the odd record side Horowitz plays the Rachmaninoff *Prelude in G Minor*. Victor Masterpiece Series M 117 (5 D 12's Alb. \$10.00).

In selecting a soloist and conductor for the recording of Rachmaninoff's third Concerto, Victor was twice fortunate. Horowitz and Coates are names to conjure with. We know of none other, with the possible exception of the composer himself, as a more ideal soloist and interpreter of the music than the brilliant Vladimir. He created a sensation with it in the concert hall and we vividly recall his performance in Boston under Koussevitzky's baton. Guided by that recording genius, Coates, it was a foregone conclusion that another glittering peak would be added to the Himalayas of recorded music.

We do not know when this set was made, but the recording especially of the piano tone shows the same improvement already noticed in the other recent Coates' releases. The blending of orchestra and piano in a performance so boldly conceived is truly remarkable

and although there have been superlative recordings of piano concertos in the past (Rachmaninoff's own version of his Second for example) they do not quite come up to this one in perfection of musical taste and musical control. With two such dynamic personalities presiding you can be sure that the ultimate intensity is reached, yet underlying there is a strong and admirable restraint.

Horowitz here confounds those critics who lauding his prodigious technique find him cerebral and cold. He reveals himself a logician, yes, but also poet and dramatist. Reproduced with fidelity and realism are his extraordinary pianistic abilities; the polishing off of difficult passages, (and the work abounds in them.) with seeming greatest ease and the subtle treatment of dynamics and rhythm. There is not one record side that has not its particular interest and in the stirring final movement there is at least one moment where he leaves you well-nigh breathless. The orchestra strives neither for predominance, nor emulates the proverbial shrinking violet, which is to say the balance is extremely good.

It is doubtful whether the third Concerto will ever be as popular as the second. It is less frankly tuneful, which may have something to do with it. On the other hand the third Concerto is more mature and has greater depth. It is darker hued and a certain austerity runs through it, yet there is one theme, the second subject of the first movement, which is one of the most beautiful melodies that Rachmaninoff ever penned. The second movement, Adagio, subtitled Intermezzo, is a veritable little tonepoem. The long introduction for orchestra evokes that nostalgic, contemplative mood characteristic of much of Rachmaninoff's music. There is grandeur in the opening measures for the piano which develops the theme. The contrasting subject is a waltz-

like theme with brilliant passages for the piano that fairly sparkle as Horowitz plays them. The Finale is show-piece for a virtuoso and Horowitz makes the most of it. Rachmaninoff introduces many striking effects, always however with legitimate means, for he eschews the freakish mannerisms of the moderns. The Concerto ends in a songful burst of glory. Regardless of what places posterity will assign Rachmaninoff to in the temple of the muse, it cannot be gainsaid that with his piano concertos he has made a notable and distinguished contribution to that type of composition. A recorded performance of this stature and excellence deserves an ever-widening and appreciating public.

On the odd record side Horowitz hurries through the Prelude in G Minor. It must have taken considerable forbearance on somebodys' part not to devote that valuable space to yet another version of "The Prelude."

A. A. B.

MOZART: *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, played by BRUNO WALTER and SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA. Columbia 68016-17 (2 D 12's \$4.00).

It may or may not be coincidence that the new Walter recordings should be released the same time the eminent conductor is making his personal appearance with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, but we hope that the fact will draw attention of the public to his recorded performances. Would it be possible for one or the other companies to induce him to make a recording with that superb organization, as a memorial of his visit to these shores?

A new version of Mozart's little Serenade was most welcome for the previous recordings were barely competent. Mozart seems to be a bugaboo for some conductors. They try to read something into his music which isn't there and the result is most often a very dull performance. Walter however knows his Mozart. To a music essentially naive, he brings an intimacy and keen insight that are infinitely moving. The recording is excellent and the strings are a joy to listen to. It is easy to prophesy that Walter's delightful performance will be the definitive version for some time to come. The disks take their place among the finest in the library of phonographic music.

BORODIN: In the *Steppes of Central Asia*, played by the LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA conducted by ALBERT COATES. VICTOR 11169 (D12 \$1.50).

Coates supplements his magnificent recording of the Borodin Symphony with an equally magnificent recording of this symphonic sketch. The history of this "mighty fragment" is interesting and will stand re-telling. Two impressarios decided to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the reign of the Czar in fitting fashion. A grand scenic production was proposed and Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakoff, Moussorgski and others were asked to write musical accompaniments for some tableaux vivants. The music was written, but the project fell through with the mysterious disappearance of the two impressarios. Borodin's piece found its way into the concert hall and became immensely popular. It is a remarkable example of pictorial suggestion at which Borodin was as great a master as Mussorgsky. Borodin limns the vastness of the steppe and evokes its silence.

This is a recording over which we could easily wax dithyrambic. Performance and reproduction approach perfection. The smallest details are brought out with so much clarity that we imagine it would be fascinating to follow the performance with a score. There should be a lively demand for this disk.

GOLDMARK: *The Queen of Sheba Ballet Music*, played by the CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, conducted by FREDERICK STOCK. VICTOR 7474 (D12 \$2.00).

There was a time when Goldmark's music was much in vogue. Goldmark the self-taught Viennese, whose gay, lusty music was a curious amalgam of Schubertian melody, Meyerbeerian pretentiousness and Wagnerian sonority—who, it is said, once pointed out his birthplace to Brahms with the remark that some day a tablet would be put up there. "Which will say on it, 'To Let,'" answered Brahms.

Of late years however his music has begun to date. Concert hall performances have been less frequent. It is a pleasure therefore to hear again the ballet music from *The Queen of Sheba*, a composition which should be represented on disks. Evidently Stock enjoys playing Goldmark and here is eloquent proof. His performance is brilliant. There is a lush ripeness to the long-drawn melody which takes up most of the second side of the disk. This is, by the way, a tune with which Victor Herbert could hardly have been unfamiliar.

The piece gives the Chicagoans a chance to disport themselves and they surely make the most of the opportunity. Their electrifying playing together with the rich, realistic recording make this, considering the music, one of their most popular releases. It should have a wide appeal.

HONEGGER: *Rugby*—Symphonic Movement for Orchestra, played by SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA conducted by the composer. COLUMBIA-G—68018-D (D12 \$1.50).

Honegger created a sensation with his symphonic locomotive, with his rugby match he merely ruffled some of the conservatives. The disk will attract both moderns and the curious. It is, for one thing, a composer's version, so any resulting kicks in the shins are probably intentional. The game hardly gets under way when you find Stravinsky and Schoenberg on opposite sides.

WAGNER

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The referee valiantly blows his whistle, but that doesn't prevent the lads from colliding. Monsieur Honegger runs, or rather trips, to the rescue and finally succeeds in untangling them. The game is over when, Oh! heresy of heresies—the opposition tries to break through with a tonic chord formation.

The performance and recording are, as near as one can judge, good. Honegger of course is an uncompromising atonalist and you may have to hear the work several times before discovering a musical pattern or counterpoint. Columbia is to be thanked for bringing out a work over which controversy still rages. This is a disk people will either rave about, or at.

A. A. B.

To Late for Classification

SAINT-SAËNS: *The Swan, and Till: Serenade*, played by *Columbia Salon Orchestra*. COLUMBIA 50313-D (1 D12)

Here are excellent performances of two salon favourites. Of the two pieces, the lone survivor of Monseigneur Saint-Saëns' menagerie is the more interesting. The sentimental *Serenade*, however, seems to hold its popularity. No doubt there will be a big demand for this disk.

HANDEL: *Where'er you walk*, and FOOTE: *Bedouin Song*, sung by the *Associated Glee Clubs of America*. VICTOR 36043-A (1 D12 \$).

A notable addition to the series recorded at the actual performance. The label on the disk states that the chorus was made up of 1000 voices which is a few thousand less than that of a previous recording. Probably that is the reason this disk is less overwhelming and therefore more satisfying. Besides being a capital job of recording, it is a fine performance from a purely musical standpoint.

INSTRUMENTAL

Piano

DEBUSSY: *Two Arabesques* (Antantino con moto; Allegretto scherzando), played by WALTER GIESEKING. COLUMBIA 68019-D (D12, \$1.50).

The first Gieseeking recording I ever heard of the old Homocord acoustical disc of these two Arabesques. It is pleasant to have them out again in electrical versions, although to tell the truth, the recording here is hardly up to the superb quality of Gieseeking's recent Beethoven sonata for Columbia. The playing is straightforward, unaffected, lacking something of Gieseeking's usual polished delicacy, but delightfully clear-cut and zestful. The pieces themselves date from Debussy's earliest period, not very far removed from the Gallic school of salon writing, but there are passages that hint at the atmospheric writing of his later works, and the second Arabesque has something of the gay vitality that was to find its apotheosis in Fetes.

Chamber Music

SCHUBERT: *Quartet in G*, Op. 161 (7 sides), and MENDELSSOHN CANZONETTA from the *Quartet in E flat*, Op. 12 (1 side), played by the FLONZALEY STRING QUARTET (Betti, Pochon, Moldavan, d'Archambeau). VICTOR Masterpiece Set M-118 (4 D12s, Alb., \$8.00).

The incomparable Flonzaleys, to be heard no more in the concert hall still live miraculously for the phonograph. Recorded music fulfills its perhaps most admirable function in thus preserving and augmenting an art that can never be exactly duplicated. The present set is of course not a recent recording. It may date back as far as the Schubert Centenary; at any rate it was released in Europe over a year ago. One has no criticism for the tardiness of its American issue. It is well that such works as this should be held in reserve only to appear now and again as a heritage "held in trust" for us. I hope that there are many more such works of the Flonzaleys still to be bequeathed to the literature of "selective music."

This is the first and as yet only recording of the last and perhaps most significant of Schubert's quartets,

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somehow passed over during the flood of centennial recordings in 1928. It was written in 1826, the years of the piano sonata in G (recorded by Pouishnoff) and the tremendously popular trio in B flat (Cortot-Thibaud-Casals, and the Hess-d'Aranyi-Salmond). The work is characterized first by its Hungarian flavor, less obviously by a dramatic feeling that presaged the Schubert of the C major symphony and the works that would have been written had he lived a few more years.

The scherzo and finale are the most typically Schubertian. The former is intensely vivacious, well contrasted by a graceful trio in Ladler style. The last movement, a rondo, Allegro assai, has much the same irresistible appeal of the B flat trio. In the opening Allegro molto moderato and the Andante un poco moto, while attractively rhythmed second subject of one and the pensive first theme of the other strike no unfamiliar note, the intensity and abrupt changes of mood, the dramatic note of urgency and daring indicate clearly that Schubert needed only a few more years to strike greater depths than he was ever able to sound. Certain passages here could never have been written by the untrained, natural melodist of popular imagination. Fate forbade Schubert to enter a "last period" like that of Beethoven, but this work gives us a vivid prophecy of what that last period might have been.

The work is a long one, though far from being as repetitious as some of Schubert's larger composition. Only the joy of having another album set from the Flonzaleys can reconcile one to the fact that this version is frequently and seriously "cut." The recording, too,

would be open to considerable criticism if it were of current vintage. However, such factors cannot dim the glory of great music nobly played.

On the last record side, which might have gone to some of the excised material in the quartet, the Flonzaleys plays with accustomed grace and dexterity an Allegretto from a Mendelssohn quartet,—a very slight *Lied ohne Worte*, but thrilling in the perfection of its performance.

R. D. D.

Violoncello

KARL P. E. BACH: *Concerto in A, No. 3—Largo mesto*, and *d'Hervelois: Plainte*, played by Maurice Marechal, with piano accompaniments. COLUMBIA 50414-D (D12, \$1.25).

Marechal can always be counted upon for unconventional recording material as well as sound and vital performances. The grave concerto movement reveals the loveliness of Marechal's 'cello tone throughout the instrument's register. A welcome addition to the scant recorded list of works by great Bach's most talented

CHORAL

NEGRO SECULAR SONGS (arr. HALL JOHNSON): *Water Boy*, *St. James Infirmary Blues*, and *Eastman*, sung by the HALL JOHNSON NEGRO CHOIR, mixed voices unaccompanied. VICTOR 36047 (D12, \$1.25).

The Hall Johnson Choir, establishing its fame in the New York production of *Green Pastures*, gave recorded music one of its most exciting discs in their release of a set of six spirituals over a year ago. In the interim they have evidently refined their spontaneous and unsophisticated art. Perhaps they have listened too well to the Russian Symphonic or Don Cossack choirs. Something of the old freedom and exhilaration is lost, particularly in the performance of *Water Boy*. The arrangement is a little too clever, smacking of Gershwin and Grofé, and despite the truly glorious voices and the admirably trained singing, there is a discouraging atmosphere of artificiality. The two fine songs on the other side have more of the old gusto, and here the arrangements, ingenious as they are, sound less sophisticated and strainless after effects. The cross pull of rhythms in some transition passages of the blues and the unsubdued zest of *Eastman* alone would make the disc of marked worth. The various soloists reveal grand voices and the recording does both the solos and ensembles full justice.

Monotonously Rings the Little Bell and *Volga Boatmen's Song*, by Capt. A. H. STRELSKY'S COSSACK SINGERS and ORCHESTRA (V. YAKUSHEFF, solo tenor). COLUMBIA 2583-D (D10, 75c.).

This disc scarcely bears comparison with those of the Don Cossack's Choir, although the singing is characteristically enough Russian in its excessive lugubriousness. The small balaika orchestra confines itself to very conventional accompaniments.

OPERATIC

DIE WALKURE—*Du bist der Lenz*, and *Tristan and Isolde—Liebestod*, sung in German by LOTTE LEHMANN with orchestral accompaniments. COLUMBIA G-9049-M (D12, \$2.00).

The release of several Lehmann *lieder* records needed balancing with a few operatic excerpts. The *Lovedeath*

has been done many times before on records, but Lotte Lehmann's tranquil rather than impassioned performance, and the glorious color of her voice—admirably adapted for recording make this a welcome duplication. The unspecified orchestra is discreet and competent, but falls far short of the musical stature of the soloist.

MOZART: *Don Giovanni—Batti, O Bel Masetto*, and *Il Re Pastore—L'Amoro Saro Costante*, sung by ELISABETH RETHBERG with orchestral accompaniments. VICTOR 7472 (D12, \$2.00).

Madame Rethberg's disks are of first importance especially when Mozart is involved. Both arias are sung in her best voice displaying its ravishing tonal quality. We have not heard Schuman's recorded performance of *L'Amoro sarò costante*, but we doubt if Rethberg's could be bettered. In both selections the orchestra is well balanced and furnishes a charming background.

SONGS

BAUMGARTNER: *Noch sind die Tage des Rosen*, and NESSLER: *Der Trompeter von Sakkingen—"Behüt dich Gott"*, sung in German by RICHARD TAUBER, with orchestral accompaniments conducted by ERNST HAUKE. COLUMBIA G-9048-M (D12, \$2.00).

LEHAR: *Zigeunerliebe—"Und wenn mein Lieb"*, and JOHANN STRAUSS: *Der Zigeunerbaron—"Als flotter Geist"*, sung in German by RICHARD TAUBER, with orchestral accompaniments conducted by ERNST HAUKE. COLUMBIA G-4060-M (D10, \$1.50).

The Tauber flood continues unabated. But familiarity cannot dull one's admiration. Even in so well-worn a vehicle as the familiar Nessler air, the man's voice and his perfect command of it give as vivid a pleasure as if voice and song were being heard for the first time. The Strauss-Léhar disc offers less familiar fare, and the *Gypsy Baron* excerpt reveals a little exploited capacity for briskness and scherzando singing in Tauber. The accompanying orchestra is unusually competent.

The Harp That Once Thro' Tara's Halls, and *The Garden Where the Praties Grow*, sung in English by JOHN MCCORMACK, with piano accompaniments by EDWIN SCHNEIDER. VICTOR 1553 (D10, \$1.50).

It is gratifying to hear Mr. McCormack abandoning the quasi-Irish songs of sound film style for a genuine, timeless Irish air. The singing is admirably simple and unaffected. The *Garden Where the Praties Grow* is more conventionally Irish, but it has a gay lilt, and Mr. McCormack brings out its humor in engaging fashion. As always, the enunciation is a model for all concert and recording singers.

SCHUBERT: *Am Meer*, and SCHUMANN: *A Wanderer's Song*, sung by FRIEDRICH SCHORR, with piano accompaniments by DR. R. JAGER. VICTOR 7473 (D12, \$2.00).

Schorr leaves the operatic field for a moment to sing these well-known *lieder*. Remembering Kipnis' boisterous *Wanderlied*, Schorr's by comparison is a model of restraint, but then Kipnis being an admirable bass was somewhat handicapped. Both selections are exquisitely done, controlled strength being matched by tenderness. You could not wish for a more musicianly performance. The piano accompaniments are well done.

CARMICHAEL: *Rockin' Chair*, and DIXON-WOODS: *River, Stay 'Way from my Door*, sung by PAUL ROBESON with orchestral accompaniments. VICTOR 22889 (D10, 75c.).

Rockin' Chair and *Stay 'Way from my Door* are undoubtedly the best of the imitation spirituals of recent

vintage. The former in particular approaches very closely the genuine article. Robeson wisely makes no attempt to elevate them into art songs. He sings them simply, unpretentiously, to mildly hot jazz accompaniments. Something of his usual gusto and heartfulness seems to be lacking and the balance between voice and accompaniment is poorly maintained, but despite such handicaps, this is easily the best recorded vocal version of Rockin' Chair, and a very close second to Ethel Waters' incomparable performance of River, Stay 'Way from my Door.

C. C.

Band

WEBER (art. GROSSIN): *Concerto No. 2 for Clarinet—Recitative and Polonaise*, played by M. VERNEY with the GARDE REPUBLICAINE BAND, conducted by M. PIERRE DUPONT. COLUMBIA 2584-D (D10, 75c).

A deft, cleanly recorded exposition of a virtuoso clarinet piece. It is interesting to hear a first class European band in material like this of considerable musical significance.

FUCIK: *Entry of the Gladiators*, and TEIKE (art. WOODHOUSE): *Old Comrads March*, played by the COLUMBIA 2582-D (D10, 75c).

A small band playing with tremendous zest and snap, and vigorously recorded. A very striking and impressive disc.

VALLES: *Marcia Italien*, and CAMPA: *Viva Celeya*, played by CREATORE'S BAND. VICTOR (Italian list) V-12216 (D10, 75c).

This is quite unlike most of Creatore's releases, but equally effective. Somewhat shrill, very flashy, the performances are thrown off with virtuoso brilliance and scintillating fire.

A. F.

POPULAR—DANCE RECORDED RHYTHM

Of Thee I Sing

The Gershwin Bros., developing the rich vein of satire first exploited in "Strike Up the Band!", have made "Of Thee I Sing" one of the finest musical comedies hits of recent seasons. The music is in the best Gershwin style, with half a dozen tunes of hit calibre. The first recordings naturally concentrate on the more songful tunes, the title song and Who Cares. These are played by the *Knickerbockers* for Columbia and by *Arden & Ohman* for Victor (2300), both in competent fashion. More ambitious is the Brunswick twelve-incher by *Abe Lyman's* orchestra, playing the same two songs on one side, and devoting the other to the grand campaign song, Love is Sweeping the Country (20103). Now for Because, the torchlight parade, "Wintergreen for President", and some of the other glorious tunes.

Other Show Hits

Now show tunes occupy most of the disk makers' attention, but beside the Gershwin hits, there are recordings from Peter Arno's flop, "Here Goes the Bride"—Music in My Fingers and I Love a Parade, played in *Arden & Ohman's* sparkling style (Victor 22892), and new versions of "Palmy Days" tunes. *Ben Bernie* plays There's Nothing Too Good for My Baby with fair animation, but fails to capitalize his opportunities in the vocal chorus. The coupling is *Abe Lyman's* rather doleful and monotonous performance of You Try Somebody Else, featuring a sweet fiddle obbligato (Brunswick 6220).

Buddy Campbell gets plenty of pep and swing into Bend Down Sister, with a pretty fair comedy chorus, backing it up with a less exuberant performance of I Wouldn't Change You for the World (Okeh 41543).

To Croon or Not to Croon

The crooning boom which has been reaching new highs this season seemed headed for deflation under the savage attack of Boston's Cardinal O'Connell, given great press publicity last month. Such epithets as "bleating and whining" . . . "sensuous, effeminate, luxurious sort of paganism" . . . "unmoral slush, unworthy of any American man" stung the crooning kings to a pathetic disownment of their peculiar art. Their protests are broadcast by the Associated Press: "I'm positively not a crooner" (Rudy Vallée); "I don't know how to croon" (Russ Columbo); "I'm sure the Boston Cardinal wasn't referring to me" (Kate Smith); "Crooning is something I don't like to be told I do" (Morton Downey). To the defense of their headlines rushed N. B. C. and C. B. S. The latter system pointed to its radio dictionary where crooning is defined as "the deliberate restraining of the voice in order to obtain smoothness and consistent mellowness by counting on the amplification of the microphone rather than on the normal rise and fall of the volume of the voice."

Another, but less ferocious attack came from another source. Brunswick released *Victor Young's* record of the Dubin-Burke musical slap at the "public enemies" "Crosby, Columbo, and Vallée." To a very catchy, peppy tune, a clever lyric depicts the menace of "these crooning vagabonds who are stealing all our blondes." The orchestration is equally amusing, introducing a delicious flute trill before Vallée's name, and breaking into suave quotations of various crooning favorites. The coupling is Now's the Time to Fall in Love, and the record number-br 6239—one of the best discs of the month.

Meanwhile the chastened crooners continue their usual phonographic output. *Bing Crosby* does his best work in Dinah, although his assisting artists, the *Mills Bros.* steal the show from him with their brisk accompaniments and wa-wa solos (Brunswick 6240). On the other side Crosby sings Can't We Talk It Over to Helen Crawford's organ accompaniments; and on Brunswick 6226 he sings conventional versions of I'm Sorry Dear and When the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day. *Mildred Bailey* escapes the usual vocalizing conventions in a highly personalized coupling of Concentratin' on You and Lies, done to effective semi-hot Negro band accompaniments (Victor 22880). *Connie Boswell* exhibits attractive if highly dulcet tone in You Try Somebody Else and Should I Be Sorry (Brunswick 6223). *Arthur Jarrett* sings pretentious versions of Honest Really Truly and Cuban Love Song, redeemed by *Tom Dorsey's* trombone solo in the latter and clever wa-wa interludes (Brunswick 6235). The best vocals of the month are *Red MacKenzie's* disk of I Found You and I'm Sorry Dear (Columbia 2587-D) and the *Boswell Sisters' Thank You Mr. Moon* and Nothing is Sweeter than You (Brunswick 6231). *MacKenzie* has a magnificent voice and dramatic style, infinitely more masculine and vigorous than the usual run of crooners. He is splendidly recorded and accompanied here. The *Dorsey Bros.* provide the deft accompaniments for the Boswells, whose singing this month is slower and more lyrical than usual. Fortunately there are a few of their superbly peppy interludes.

The other vocals of the month include the *Street Singer* in Save the Last Dance for Me and Home (Brunswick 6227), and *Ruth Etting* in a sweet coupling of the Cuban Love Song and Too Late (Columbia 2580-D).

Arthur Jarrett

A note on Jarrett, making his record debut for Brunswick this month, may not be amiss. Like most of the

leading recording popular singers of today he has established his fame on the radio, starring in the recent Winchell international broadcast. Graduating from vaudeville and dance bands, his "counter melodies" in Chicago broadcasts attracted the attention of the Columbia Broadcasting System, for whom he now sings. He found it impossible to memorize the lyrics of all the songs he used to sing back in war days, and began to fake the words, ad libbing his own sound obbligatos, thus inventing the "counter melody" singing which features his work so strongly today. An excellent example of it is heard on his first disc where he does effective contrapuntal vocalization to the theme of the Cuban Love Song played by Tom Dorsey on the trombone.

Up to the Minute Topical Songs

The death of Legs Diamond and suffering among the coal miners provide the inspiration for two topical song disks. The Death of Jack "Legs" Diamond, sung by *Bob Ferguson* to sweetly sentimental accompaniments by his *Scalawaggers* (Columbia 15732-D) is an undisguised sermon in song to the effect that crime never pays. It is less characteristic than the typical Southern ballad of the Unmarked Grave, soulfully chanted on the other side, and boasting some astounding rhyming and metrical ingenuities in the lyric. The Kentucky Miner's Wife (Ragged Hungry Blues) is cut from different cloth. Here is a genuine bit of Americana, colored with genuine pathos and feeling. *Aunt Molly Jackson*, of Bell Co., Kentucky, is the composer and singer, writing truly as she claims "from the heart and not from a pen." She gives a broken hesitating introduction to each side, asks her hearers to wait until she can "strike a chord", and then strums her own rude guitar accompaniments to a remarkable blues portrayal of the woes of the coal miners and their families. The record is Columbia 15731-D.

Hits of the Week

The first batch of new "Hit of the Week" records sent to us for review give good indication of the effective work the re-organized Durium Products Co. is doing. The discs are now much less flexible than before, and the tone is correspondingly more steady. Surface noise is occasionally bad at the beginning of the disks, but invariably improves to meet usual standards. The disks are all single-sided, but most of them contain two numbers. *Rudy Vallée* and his Connecticut Yankees lead with *A Faded Summer Love* and *You Try Somebody Else* (two disks), both featuring Rudy's singing and giving several opportunities to the talented pianist of his band. I like particularly the good old movie pianoing in *A Faded Summer Love*. *Phil Spitalney* also does two disks, playing *When It's Sleepy Time Down South* and *Sailing on one, Nows the Time to Fall in Love* and *After the Ball on the other*. Both feature some cleverly crisp marimba and xylophone playing. *Helen Rowland* does the competent chorus in *Sleepy Time*. The fifth disk is *Erno Rapee's* orchestra in *River Stay 'Way from My Door* and *Some of These Days*, with *Helen Rowland* again featured. I like especially the spirited playing, neat wood wind work, and the tempo changes in *Some of These Days*.

Guy and Kate

Columbia teams two of its headliners in a coupling of *River Stay 'Way from My Door* and *Too Late*. *Lombardo's Royal Canadians* do the playing, rotund *Kate Smith* the singing. *Carmen Lombardo*, disposed from his usual role of chorister, still stars, this time with the brilliant trumpet playing that begins the *River* song and is featured nearly throughout. *Too Late* begins very blandly with characteristically Lombardo employment of the saxes. *Kate Smith's* choruses exhibit beautifully her

typical flexible melodic line, constantly slurred and glissandoed. A record that should be popular (Columbia 2578-D).

Whiteman's Comeback Efforts

The portly King of Jazz is working hard for a record comeback with no less than four disks from Victor. *Gettin' Sentimental* and *My Goodbye to You* are coupled on 22876 (choruses by the *Romancers* and *Mildred Bailey*); *All of Me* and *By the Sycamore Tree* on 22879 (*Mildred Bailey* and *Jack Fulton*); *'Leven Pounds of Heaven* (*Mildred Bailey*) is coupled with *Wayne King's* easy going performance of *Lazy River* on 22883; *Vilia*, waltz from the *Merry Widow*, and *Sylvia* are played on 22885. In all of these *Whiteman* gets a good reminiscence of the tonal clarity and color of his best work, but all the performances are sadly deficient rhythmically, always *Paul's* weak point. Once he can get a little rhythmic invigoration into his playing his old honors should lie easily in his grasp; until then his efforts are severely handicapped.

The Rumba Again

Just when the rumba seemed to be languishing, *Victor* brings out *Manolo Castro* and his *Havana Yacht Club Orchestra* in a remarkable coupling of *Marta* and the *St. Louis Blues*. The former begins conventionally, suave and songful, but works up effectively at the ends. The drumming is fine. *St. Louis Blues*, however, from its curiously Chinese beginning, is a knockout throughout. The percussive effects are perhaps most noteworthy, but the trumpeting and the ingenious introduction of an obbligato (apparently ocarina or piccolo), the fiddling, and chorussing are all fine. An unusual novelty disk (*Victor* 22821).

Bennie & Jacques

Brunswick's dance features are confined mostly to the hot lists, plus of course the *Crosby Columbo & Vallée* disk mentioned earlier. Best of the ballroom dances are furnished by *Bennie Krueger* and *Jacques Renard*. The former does an attractive coupling of *Why Did It Have to be Me* and *She's So Nice*, both highly rhythmic and sprightly, yet boasting big tone achieved at no expense to swing and animation (*Brunswick* 6222). *Renard* exhibits his typical qualities of rich sonorous tone and expressive fiddling in *Fate Introduced Me to You*, *This is My Love Song*, *Tell Me With a Love Song*, and *'R' You Listenin'?* (*Brunswick* 6237 and 6238). In the later disk *Smith Ballew* provides the smooth attractive choruses, and in *'R' You Listenin'?* *Renard's* colleague in the *Camel Quarter-Hour*, *Tony Wons*, delivers a characteristic recitation.

Hylton in Paris

The *Victor* French list features a fine disk by *Jack Hylton's orchestra*, recorded in Paris. Two medleys are played, *Nos Bons Airs*, and *Nos Bons Vieux Airs*, an attractive collection of good tunes treated in almost symphonic style, recorded with a fine ear for the attractive tone qualities of the orchestra. The choruses, sung in French of course, are very well done. The pieces played include: *Frou-Frou*, *Amoureuse*, *Valse brune*, *Fascination*, *Valse bleue*, *Lelong du Missouri*, *Je sais que vous etes jolie*, *La petite Tonkinoise*, *Quand l'amour meurt*, and *Ah si vous voulez de l'amour* (*Victor* V-5526).

Miscellaneous Ballroom Dances

Okeh features as usual *Buddy Campbell*, deserting his usual exuberant style for lyrical versions of *Hidin' in the Shadows of the Moon* and *I Wonder Who's Under the Moon with You Tonight* (41540). The tone is still broad and well modulated. Less effective are the *Cloverdale*

Country Club's two disks: *All of Me, I Found You, By the Sycamore Tree*, and *Save the Last Dance for Me* (41542 and 41539).

COLUMBIAS: *Ben Selvin* in broad songful style in *All of Me* and *I Found You* (2585-D), featuring a movie style pianny solo; *Goodnight Moon* and *Oh What a Thrill* (2592-D), with some sweet fiddling, a touch of *Liebestraum* lush harmonies in the *Moon* song, and an effective atmospheric introduction in *What a Thrill*. The *Knickerbockers* in rather dull performances of *With Love in My Heart* and *Who's Your Little Who-zis*, the latter artificially stimulated and featured a baby-talk chorus (2591-D). The *Cavaliers* in a sentimental waltz coupling of *Save the Last Dance for Me* and *I Wonder Who's Under the Moon With You Tonight* (2579-D).

VICTORS: Beside those already mentioned the best are *Ted Weems' One of Us Was Wrong* and *Carolina's Calling Me*, slow and colorful, not very rhythmic, with choruses by *Elmo Tanner* and *Wes Vaughn* (22877), and *Ted Black's One More Kiss* and *Pagan Moon waltz*, marked by good sweet tone qualities, choruses by *Frank Munn* and *Chick Bullock* (22878).

BRUNSWICKS: *Renard, Victor Young*, and *Bennie Krueger's* work has already been noted. Others are *Ozzie Nelson* in a suave but piquant performance of *I Promise You* coupled with a livelier *Mary* (6228); *Tom Gerun* in sonorous, well varied versions of *All of Me* and *When We're Alone*, featuring a big-voiced choruser and a bright piano solo (6236); *Abe Lyman* in a dolefully sentimental coupling of *Blue of the Night* and *When the Rest of the Crowd Goes Home*—suave choruses by *Les Reis* (6224), and again in *Under the Moon With You* and *Pagan Moon*, both waltzes, played very expressively, with an effective guitar introduction to the former (6232); the *Regent Club*, in another waltz disk, *A Rose and a Kiss* and *Save the Last Dance*, broadly done with overly marked accents (6221).

Red Hot Pennies

The revival series of *Red Nichols' original Five Pennies*, begun a month or two ago with *Honolulu Blues* and *Oh Peter*, is augmented this month by four notable numbers: *Get Cannibal* and *Junk Man's Blues* (Brunswick 6219), *Haunting Blues* and *Yaaka Hula Hickey Duly* (Brunswick 6234). The first disk is a fine one, but the second approaches the glories of five or six years ago when the *Five Pennies* were creating jazz history. *Get Cannibal* is a fast and furious piece with continuous heavy tom-tom effects on the drums, a smooth swing, fine trombone solo work on the part of *Miff Mole*, a pretty good vocal chorus with effective responses from the orchestra, and—following the chorus—a brilliant *Schutt* piano solo to an effective bit of *Berton's* drumming. *Junk Man Blues* is on the whole still cleverer, with rattles on the cymbals for the junk man's bell, and a fine hoarsely sung chorus. *Miff Mole* stars again, and there is a nice clarinet solo from *Jimmie Dorsey*. One gets an effect something like that of the *Peanut Vendor* from the piece: the transformation of a musical street cry into a well constructed musical composition.

The other record has no vocal choruses, giving all the more opportunity for individual instrumental solos. *Haunting Blues* stars *Vic Berton* and his uncanny skill with automatically tuned kettle drums, used here equally as effectively but with more restraint than in *Honolulu Blues*. The combination of drums, guitar and piano is handled beautifully throughout, with *Ed Lang* coming through with a fine guitar solo, and the piece ending with the automatic timpani having the last word: *Yaaka Hula* was a fine old tune in its day and is dressed up in brilliant modern dress here, very brisk and catchy. *Berton* is as fine here as on the other side, but *Venuti* shares his honors from beginning. *Venuti's* solo is grand, particularly when he plays in the lower register of his

fiddle. *Schutt's* piano chorus is not so hot here, but *Red* himself gets in a good bit of trumpeting. Altogether some noteworthy scoring and playing, that almost—if not quite—bring back the thrills that one got from the *Pennies*, as form no other hot jazzists, in the early days of electrical recording.

Armstrong's New Series Grows

The new series of *Louis Armstrong* recordings for *Okeh* and *Columbia* adds four new numbers, one duplicated, and a duplication of one issued last month. *Columbia 2590-D* contains a repressing of the magnificent *I Got Rhythm* out from *Okeh* last month and a new *You Can Depend on Me*. This is done in more conventional and lyrical style than most of *Louis' records*, but the *Armstrong* idea of crooning is a far cry from the bland bleating of popular fashion. Some of his hummed tones are grand, and the ending is extremely clever. On *Okeh 41538*, *Louis* plays *You Can Depend on Me* again, and couples it with a knockout performance of the *Lonesome Road*, an amazing camp-meeting piece with the *Rev. Snatchemoff Armstrong* officiating. I can't understand half the words, either from *Louis* or his brethern, but what I can get is swell, and even the unintelligible patter is a joy considered sheerly as so much sound. There is clever choral work in the background, a fine smooth instrumental accompaniment to the conversation, and at the end a "moving of the spirit" prompts a brilliant trumpet passage in *Louis' best* vein. *Okeh 41541* couples *Lazy River* and *Georgia on My Mind*. The former boasts an unusually fine vocal by *Louis*, breaking into a magnificent lyrical wa-wa. There is a brief, ineffective pianny solo and *Louis* gets in some good trumpet work at the end. His trumpet, to detached accompaniment, begins *Georgia on My Mind*. *Louis' chorus* is not so hot, and the whole performance is a little dull until the quickening of tempo near the end.

Redman Repeats

Don Redman, making his record debut in a super-swell disk of *Shakin' the Africann* and *Song of the Weeds*, scores equally effectively in his second Brunswick release, *I Heard and Trouble Why Pick On Me?* (6233). The first piece has magnificent animation and sonority, with fine string bass playing, and two of *Don's* own personalized monologues. The *Trouble* song is slower, more lyrical, with a fair chorus, unfortunately not by *Redman* himself. The hushed ending is highly interesting, and there are vivid bits of solo trumpet and piano work.

Dorsey Bros. & Venuti

The *Dorsey Bros.* orchestra has *Columbia 2581-D* to itself with *By the Sycamore Tree* and *Ooh That Kiss*, and shares *Columbia 2589-D* (*Why Did It Have to be Me?*) with *Venuti's Rhythm Boys* (*Wolf Wobble*). The first disk is only fair, conventional arrangements and playing that tends to be noisy, although there are brief bits of fine clarinet and trombone playing by *Jim* and *Tom Dorsey* respectively. *Why Did It Have to be Me* is somewhat better, containing some fair trumpeting and getting considerable rhythmic lift toward the end. But *Venuti's Wolf Wobble* is a jazzical masterpiece mighty close to the calibre of *Tempo di Modernage*. *Venuti's* fiddle, *Lang's* guitar, and *Graselli's* percussion get off to a grand beginning, and *Jim Dorsey's* clarinet soon stars. *Venuti* soon gets a chance to do some of his incomparable fiddling and there is a fair piano chorus (*Hayton* or *Signorelli*). *Ed Lang* has a good solo, and he and *Venuti* share honors in some remarkable ensemble work to the end.

Mills

The *Mills Bros.* continue their astounding vocalizations with *You Rascal You* and *Baby Won't You Please*

Come Home (Brunswick 6225). Note particularly the remarkable muted trumpet and sax choir effects in the former, to say nothing of the very passable bass tuba, all produced "without mechanical aids." There are good choruses in each piece, with effective use of semi-instrumental choral accompaniments. On Brunswick 6229 the *Mills Blue Rhythm Boys* play *Savage Rhythm* and *I'm Sorry I Made You Blue*. The first is fairly conventional jungle stuff with much heavy drumming and a fair rhythmic swing. The coupling has nice quality and a fine flowing melodic line, and a good short solo by the talented ivory tickler of the band, Edgar Hayes.

Henderson - Memphis Five

Fletcher Henderson gets a fine good humor into his performances of *My Pretty Gal* and *My Gal Sal*. The latter is particular vigorous in both tone and animation. There is some snappy trumpeting, and the piece winds up in a fine burst of energy. The *Original Memphis Five* does even better than last month with a very slow *Anytime*, a long solo to steady piano background, with a clarinet solo later and a nice bit from Signorelli's piano. *Jazz Me Blues*, on the other side, is a good jaunty air, with Signorelli's piano again starring, with some nice supporting clarinet and trumpet work, latter by Napoleon (Columbia 2588-D).

Blues

Best of the blues this month is Lizzie Miles' *Electrician Blues*, a much cleverer variant and development of the *Radio Papa* theme, got across brilliant above a deftly restrained piano accompaniment. *Done Threwed the Key Away*, on the other side, is less striking, and sung to a dull accompaniment of piano, guitar, and string bass (Victor 23306). Columbia offers the *Smith* gals; Clara singing *You Dirty Dog* and *For Sale* (14633-D), and Bessie Need a Little Sugar in My Bowl and *Safety Mama* (14634-D). The last-named is a sad plaint and the coupling is broader in tone and humor. Clara's disk has more individuality,—the gusto of the spoken phrases and the fine hummed tones in *Dirty Dog* are very effective, while the more lyrical *Fore Sale* treats a rustic theme in emphatically roguish fashion.

Less noteworthy are *Grant & Wilson's* *You Can't Do That to Me* and *I Don't Want That Stale Stuff* (Columbia 14637-D), while only passing mention goes to *Mary Willis' Rough Alley* and *Low Down Blues* (Okeh 8921), and *Lillie Mae's* *Mama Don't Want It* and *Bootie Wah Bootie* (Okeh 8920). For spirituals, the *Cotton Pickers Quartet* offer routine harmonizations of *Swing Low* and *All God's Chilluns Got Wings* (Okeh 8917).

Sundry Jazz Echoes

Paul Whiteman has resumed his symphonic concerts after an interim of several years. At a Chicago concert he played *Ferdy Grofe's* *tone Poem*, "*Knute Rockne*", and a "*Grand Canyon*" suite; *Guion's* "*Shingandi*" (with the composer playing the piano part); and *Gershwin's* "*American in Paris*". The hits of the program were the *Grand Canyon* suite and *Roy Barge's* arrangement of the "*Peanut Vendor*."

Rudy Vallée and his *Connecticut Yankees*, exclusive Victor artists for several years, is reported not to have renewed his Victor contract, and is now appearing on Durium "*Hit of the Week*" records.

The Victor hot lists have a rich treat in store in the form of a series of recordings by *Chick Webb's* *Savoy Ballroom Orchestra*, not yet released. Webb's orchestra is reputed the best Negro band in Harlem today, with unusual qualities, while their arrangements—by *Bennie Carter*—are the last word in modernistic jazz.

RUFÉ HARLEM

THE PHONOPHILE'S BOOKSHELF

Olin Downes' Broadcast Talks

SYMPHONIC BROADCASTS. A discussion of representative works of the orchestral repertory. By Olin Downes. New York, Lincoln Mac Veagh—the Dial Press. 1932. 330 pp. \$2.50.

Olin Downes, music critic of the *New York Times*, chosen to deliver the explanatory talks on the broadcast programs of the New York Philharmonic-Symphony, became almost over night and to his own astonishment, an emphatic radio hit. Talking simply (or "sociable-like" as he says himself), he somehow managed to present a wealth of information spiced with colorful anecdote and colored by a marked and vivid personality. The Columbia Broadcasting studios were nearly swamped with his fan mail and a flood of requests for copies of his talks in printed form.

Now comes a complete collection of his talks during the 1930-1931 season, covering twenty-eight programs of the New York Philharmonic-Symphony under Toscanini, Kleiber, Molinari, etc., and embodying descriptive notes on some one hundred and fifty orchestral works, nearly all drawn from the standard symphonic repertory.

Mr. Downes writes in his introduction that he has attempted to provide hints of an untechnical kind about orchestral compositions which will be useful and suggestive, especially to those who have not specialized in music. Some historical notes are included, many personal experiences of the author lend color to his descriptions of contemporary composers, but the music itself is given the bulk of attention, serving the needs of radio or concert audiences, and also those who have record libraries of symphonic works.

In the latter connection it is highly interesting to note that of the twenty-eight programs, twelve are available in complete recorded form, fourteen are contained in a majority of the works played in recorded versions, and only two are totally unrepresented on discs. Program makers for phonographic concerts will find the programs here excellent models to follow.

The high points of the book are the superb pages devoted to *Till Eulenspiegel* and *Don Quixote*, Sibelius, Gluck, Berlioz, and Debussy. These alone should win *Symphonic Broadcasts* a place in every phonophile's reference library.

R. D. D.

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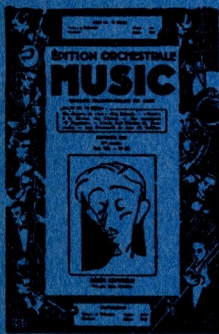
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